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Chairman:	Mr. Suazo	(Honduras)
later:	Mr. Van der Pluijm (Vice-Chairman)	(Belgium)
later:	Mr. Suazo	(Honduras)

Contents

Agenda item 91: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

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The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 91: Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources (A/57/63-E/2002/21)

1. **Ms. Al-Bassam** (Chief, Regional Commissions New York office) introduced on behalf of the Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) the report on the economic and social repercussions of the Israeli occupation on the living conditions of the Palestinian people in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan (A/57/63-E/2002/21). In the period under review, the upsurge in violence had continued and confrontations had increased in severity. The situation was characterized by the use of heavy conventional weapons, extrajudicial killings and collective punishment of the civilian population. The circumstances under which many innocent civilians had been killed in village bombings and gunfire exchange evidenced an indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force. The cycle of violence was reaching Israeli civilians, who had been killed by suicide bomb attacks in Israel itself and by gunfire directed against settler on bypass roads or in the proximity of settlements.

2. The Israeli authorities had continued the widespread practice of destroying property. In the Gaza Strip, between September 2000 and 31 January 2002, 660 homes housing 845 families had been razed or partially torn down, mostly at night, without any advance notice to the residents. Many cultivated areas had been devastated by the Israeli army, having been levelled with bulldozers in order to create buffer zones for constructing bypass roads and settlements. Vast numbers of fruit trees had been uprooted, and wells and agricultural installations had been demolished.

3. The violence and occupation had traumatized the Palestinian population. The deaths of male heads of households, coupled with frustration due to unemployment and enforced immobility, had sent the crime rate soaring. Given the high percentage of the population under 18, the impact could be expected to have a significant effect on the next generation. Many Palestinians described themselves as overwhelmed by fear about the future and feelings of hopelessness.

4. Checkpoints, closures and curfews seriously impeded access to medical care, education and work. Israel's relentless restrictions on freedom of movement had created severe economic, social and psychological hardship, with devastating consequences for the already fragile Palestinian economy. The proportion of Palestinians living in poverty had more than doubled since the crisis had broken out, and half of the Palestinian workforce was currently unemployed. According to the World Bank, poverty-reduction prospects were dismal if the Palestinian territory did not attain a high rate of economic growth. Not only the number, but also the proportion of poor Palestinians was expected to rise, and that could become a socially destabilizing factor.

5. Some 190 West Bank and Gaza Strip settlements were linked to each other and to Israel by a vast system of bypass roads. Those settlements and roads separated the Palestinian communities, left the Palestinians without land to cultivate and disrupted the territorial integrity of the occupied Palestinian territory. The Israeli measures had degraded the soil, damaged water resources and halted essential infrastructure work. Internal closures deprived Palestinian villages of access to drinking water. The homes of some two hundred thousand Palestinians in 218 West Bank villages had no connection to a water supply network and therefore no running water. Movement restrictions aggravated the situation by making it difficult for tankers to transport water to the communities affected, leaving them unable to meet such essential needs as basic personal hygiene and house-cleaning and consequently open to significant health risks. Some 36 Palestinian villages had received no water supply for periods ranging from one week to two months. Difficulty in accessing water springs, which were under Israeli authority, had considerably increased the price of trucked water at a time when Palestinian employment and income had plummeted.

6. In the Golan Heights, part of the Syrian Arab Republic, some 17,000 Israeli settlers resided in 33 settlements, an 18 percent increase over 1994. Employment opportunities for the Arab population in the Syrian Golan Heights continued to be very limited. Persons fortunate enough to find work had no access to social benefits, health insurance or unemployment compensation and received substantially lower wages.

7. **Ms. Barghouti** (Observer for Palestine) said that sovereignty over natural resources was a fundamental component of the economic and social development of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian Authority had made great efforts to establish an institutional framework for the founding of a Palestinian State, and from 1994 to 2000, the Palestinian economy had shown some signs of recovery and improvement. With the assistance of the international community, the Palestinian Authority had been able to provide essential services to more than 3 million Palestinians. The bloody military campaign which Israel had been waging against the Palestinian people since September 2000, however, had brought about unprecedented economic deterioration and a dire humanitarian crisis, plunging more than half the Palestinian population into poverty.

8. In March of that year, the situation had deteriorated with the Israeli invasion and reoccupation of Palestinian cities and refugee camps. The Israeli military attacks had resulted in nearly 2,000 deaths and 35,000 injuries. Using heavy weapons, the occupying forces had continued destroying homes and properties, targeting ambulances and medical personnel, obstructing access to the wounded, and destroying electricity and water networks, roads, trees and agricultural lands. Those attacks, together with restrictions on movement within the Occupied Territory and between it and the rest of the world, had caused losses amounting to $11.5 billion in the Palestinian economy. Unemployment had reached alarming levels. Israel had continued to build illegal settlements in the Occupied Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to divert water resources.

9. The international community must take urgent measures to end Israeli destruction of the Palestinian economy, rebuild Palestinian institutions and ease the suffering of the Palestinian people. In that connection, she expressed gratitude for the assistance provided by various non-governmental organizations and other entities. She reaffirmed the urgent need for the Palestinian people to live a normal life, free from Israeli occupation, destruction and fear, in their own independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

10. **Mr. Fahmy** (Egypt) said that, despite years of deliberations on the permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people over their natural resources, the situation in the area had grown considerably worse, including with regard to the most precious resource of all, human life. The settlers were acting like terrorists, illegally expelling Palestinians from their lands. Moreover, Israel refused to apply the (Fourth) Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem and the Golan. Since respect for human rights was the prevailing philosophy in the United Nations, it was a disgrace that Israel was allowed to act as if it were above the law and that its occupation of the Palestinian Territory was not being ended as soon as possible.

11. **Mr. Al-Haddad** (Yemen) recapitulated Israeli practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan, as set out in the report prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA). Those practices, which were contrary to the Fourth Geneva Convention and numerous Security Council and General Assembly resolutions, were a major obstacle to the achievement of peace and security in the region.

12. **Mr. Cheah Sam Kip** (Malaysia) expressed his delegation's deep concern at the difficult living conditions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the occupied Syrian Golan. Malaysia strongly condemned the illegal Israeli occupation policy which was contrary to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations and clearly violated numerous General Assembly and Security Council resolutions as well as international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention. His delegation was appalled at the Israeli Defence Forces' utter disregard for the sanctity of life and the safety of the civilian population, particularly children. Malaysia also strongly condemned Israel's deliberate policy of blocking access by humanitarian aid agencies to the Palestinian people.

13. Israel should be reminded that the General Assembly had reaffirmed the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and the population of the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources. It had also called on Israel not to exploit or endanger those resources, and had recognized the right of the inhabitants of the territories to claim restitution as a result of loss. Israel's blatant disregard for the provisions of General Assembly resolutions had had a negative impact on the environment. Israeli policy had also prevented the continuation of infrastructure projects supported by the international community.

Such practices were unacceptable, and pressure must be exerted to ensure that Israel put an end to that state of affairs.

14. The expansion of Israeli settlements was a gross violation of the provisions of article 49, paragraph 6, of the Fourth Geneva Convention. In many resolutions, the United Nations had declared those settlements illegal. Malaysia feared that the settlements, bypass roads and buffer zone would jeopardize the realization of a sovereign and viable Palestinian State by destroying its territorial integrity.

15. In conclusion, Malaysia reiterated that, in order for the peace process to resume, Israel must put an immediate end to its policies and practices, which were the cause of the ongoing violence in the Occupied Territory. If the international community wished to preserve its credibility, it should not apply double standards and must ensure the full implementation of all relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

16. **Mr. Al-Sulaiti** (Bahrain) said that Israel continued to violate the provisions of Security Council resolutions, in particular those of resolution 446 (1979), which stated that the practices of Israel in establishing settlements in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967 had no legal validity, and contravened the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The situation in the region was deteriorating steadily due to the extreme violence of Israeli practices. In 2002, Israel had been responsible for terrible massacres in Jenin, Khan Yunis and other refugee camps. Such activities threatened the security of the region and constituted a manifest violation of human rights in the occupied Palestinian territories.

17. Israeli forces were destroying the infrastructure and natural resources of Palestine and the occupied Syrian Golan, and were confiscating land to establish settlements and eliminate Palestinian identity in the occupied territories, resulting in terrible consequences for the Palestinian people. Israel controlled access to water resources and Palestinians could not satisfy their basic needs, since water was diverted to satisfy the growing demand in the Israeli settlements. Closure policies and the use of foreign manpower also caused serious economic and social harm to Palestinians.

18. Bahrain reaffirmed that it was necessary to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in accordance with United Nations resolutions. The international community should demand the withdrawal of Israel from all Arab territories occupied since 1967 and ensure that the Palestinian people were able to exercise their right to create an independent State on its territory, with Jerusalem as its capital.

19. **Mr. Al-Tunaiji** (United Arab Emirates) said that reports on Israeli aggression in the occupied Palestinian territories and the Syrian Golan underlined the destruction and damage resulting from the Israeli acts, and their impact on living conditions in those territories.

20. The United Arab Emirates was deeply concerned by the war crimes that Israel was committing as part of a systematic policy of aggression against an entire population, in flagrant violation of international law, Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on the question of Palestine and the Syrian Golan, and the Fourth Geneva Convention. Accordingly, it called on the international community to insist that Israel should end its aggression in the occupied Palestinian territories immediately and implement Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), and General Assembly resolution 56/204. The United Arab Emirates urged the United Nations to insist that Israel should withdraw from all Arab territories it had occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem, the Syrian Golan and the Shab'a area of Lebanon, and implement all the agreements concluded with the Palestinian Authority within the framework of the principle of land for peace, which was backed by the Arab peace initiative, and the American vision which called for the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital. The United Arab Emirates also urged the United Nations to demand that Israel should compensate the Arabs in the occupied territories for the material and moral losses resulting from the destruction of their means of subsistence.

21. **Mr. Al-Manai** (Qatar) said that since the signing of the 1993 agreement between the Palestinian Authority and Israel, Qatar had reaffirmed the importance of the complete withdrawal of Israel from the occupied territory, including Jerusalem and the other occupied Arab territories and the occupied Syrian Golan, pursuant to the provisions of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and the principle of land for peace. The situation in the region was critical, for the incursions, curfews and

closure policy was tantamount to a siege on Palestinian territory. Israeli practices were becoming increasingly brutal and were having serious consequences on the economic and social situation and on the environment and natural resources.

22. Qatar urged the international community to take on its political and legal responsibilities with respect to the Palestinian people and to demand that Israel should respect the sovereignty of the Palestinian people over their natural resources, and their right to create an independent Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital. Israel should also withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan and the rest of the occupied Lebanese territories, in compliance with the relevant resolutions and in accordance with the principle of land for peace.

23. **Mr. Ahmad** (Iraq) recalled that General Assembly resolution 56/204, among other things, reaffirmed the principle of the permanent sovereignty of people under foreign occupation over their natural resources and expressed its concern at the exploitation, by the occupying Power, of the natural resources of the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and other Arab territories occupied since 1967. It also recognized the right of the Palestinian people to claim restitution as a result of any loss or depletion of, or danger to, their natural resources.

24. The Zionist military occupation of Palestinian territories continued to pose a threat to international peace and security. The Security Council had adopted a number of resolutions concerning the war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the occupying Zionist entity against the Palestinian people. However, far from respecting the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, that entity had gone ahead with its aggressive and infamous plan of disregarding Council resolutions, with the support of the United States. The Security Council had been unable to adopt resolutions under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations and had applied double standard, acting under Chapter VII only in regard to Iraq, in the context of unfair and oppressive resolutions, because of the supremacy of a single member State.

25. Under articles 10, 11 and 14 of the United Nations Charter, the General Assembly had a mandate to carry out the basic function of maintaining international peace and security and had before it a historic opportunity to resume that function after the failure of the Security Council. Accordingly, the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to submit a report on the tragic situation in the Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, the serious deterioration of economic and social conditions, the assassinations, the cases of torture, the detentions, the deportations, the embargo, the subjection to hunger, demolition of dwellings on the heads of their inhabitants, including women, children, young persons and the elderly, the destruction of harvests, the felling of trees in the occupied Palestinian territories and the transformation of Jerusalem. The preparation of that report should be based on the numerous available sources, in particular civilian witnesses — Palestinian and foreign — and reports disseminated by the communications media.

26. The international community must take steps at all levels to ensure that the occupying Zionist Power respected the provisions of conventions, abided by resolutions critical of it, withdrew from all the occupied Palestinian territories and the occupied Syrian Arab Golan and allowed humanitarian organizations to do their work, in accordance with the provisions of international humanitarian law.

27. The failure of the Zionist entity to respect international law, in particular the Charter, and the commission of genocide against the Palestinian people, a crime which had no equivalent in history, had helped to undermine well-established international juridical principles. The General Assembly could not ignore that behaviour, the destructive consequences of which would affect the entire world.

28. Finally, he reaffirmed his delegation's full support for the struggle of the Palestinian people and reiterated that the international community and the United Nations system must assume their rightful responsibilities. Failure to do so would affect the credibility of the United Nations as an organization devoted to the maintenance of international peace and security.

29. *Mr. van der Pluijm (Belgium), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

30. **Mr. Al-Hadid** (Jordan) recalled the negative economic and environmental effects described in the report of the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and noted that according to the Arab Human Development Report prepared in 2002 by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the illegal occupation of Arab territories by Israel

constituted one of the greatest obstacles to security and progress in the region. The confiscation of Palestinian lands, the limits on access to water and other natural resources, the restrictions on the free movement of goods and persons and the structural obstacles to employment and self-management of the economy hindered the establishment of a viable economy and the creation of an independent and secure State. Furthermore, the expansion of illegal settlements, the frequent use of excessive force against Palestinians and the violation of the most basic human rights further limited the Palestinians' human development capacity.

31. In recent years his Government had redoubled its efforts to achieve a general and lasting peace in the Middle East. He called on the international community to increase its financial assistance to the Palestinian economy and to promote foreign investment. The only way to settle the conflict in the Middle East was to resume the peace process at the point at which it had been interrupted, in accordance with the conditions agreed by the parties, in other words: withdrawal by Israel from all the territories occupied since 1967 and recognition of an independent Palestinian State with its capital in Jerusalem, pursuant to international resolutions and in keeping with the desire of all the peoples of the region to live in peace and develop their natural resources with a view to achieving sustainable development and general prosperity.

32. **Mr. Al-Doraee** (Kuwait) said that the Israeli occupation forces were attempting to terrorize the Palestinian people and destroy its industrial and agricultural infrastructure. Israel had not received the fact-finding mission sent by the Security Council with a view to investigating the tragic situation of the Palestinian people, which provided clear evidence of its brutal practices. Israel claimed that those practices were self-defence against terrorism, which made a mockery of human values and international standards and explicitly violated United Nations resolutions and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. Israel had ignored the many resolutions adopted by the United Nations as if it considered itself to be a State above the law, and answerable to no one.

33. The peoples of the occupied Arab territories had every right to exercise their human, economic and social rights and develop their natural resources. Respect for those rights was an essential condition for the sustainable development of the region. The Arabs had held out the olive branch, and his delegation associated itself with the Arab position adopted at the Arab League Summit held recently in Beirut, which had approved the initiative proposed by the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia. The response of the Government of Israel had been to send troops to invade Palestinian cities and refugee camps in the West Bank. If Israel desired real peace, it must abandon its ambitions and end its aggression, withdraw from all the Arab territories which it had occupied in 1967 and grant the Palestinian people and the Arab population of the Syrian Golan the right to develop their natural resources and to exercise sovereignty over them, because violence only led to more violence and every action provoked an equal and opposite reaction.

34. **Mr. Nadai** (Israel) said that since the beginning of the previous decade all Israeli Governments had worked to achieve a peace agreement with their Palestinian and Syrian neighbours. The Madrid Conference and the Oslo agreements, which had also resulted in the peace treaty with Jordan, had seemed to open a new era in Arab-Israeli relations. Israel had wanted to believe that it had found a partner for peace in the Palestinian Authority and its President. It had looked forward to the enormous opportunities inherent in the peace process and had never viewed that process in terms of one-dimensional political negotiations. Israeli Governments, since the launch of the peace process, had attached special importance to jointly dealing with a wide range of subjects, including control over natural resources, water rights, development of industry, eradication of poverty and sustainable development, in order to improve the living conditions of both peoples.

35. During the 1990s Israel and the Palestinian Authority had jointly taken steps meant to build confidence among the parties and improve their situation. Israel had long experience in assisting developing societies and it was only natural for it to place emphasis on development cooperation with the Palestinian Authority. The Israeli Foreign Ministry's Centre for International Cooperation (MASHAV) concentrated mainly on agriculture, cooperation, rural development, medicine and public health, management, telecommunications, science and technology, education, environment, the role of women in developing societies and conflict resolution. Thousands of Palestinian students had taken part in various programmes within that framework.

36. The new millennium had unfortunately brought no improvement in the situation in the Middle East. In July 2000, at Camp David, Chairman Arafat and the then Prime Minister Ehud Barak had met in the presence of President Clinton in an effort to reach an agreement on permanent status. In those negotiations, the Government of Israel had exhibited willingness to undertake painful compromises in order to achieve peace. The Palestinians had rejected a plan fully compatible with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and instead had elected to pursue a strategy of violence. Ever since a wave of violence and terror had engulfed the Israeli cities and cost hundreds of lives, both Palestinian and Israeli. That terrorist activity had aimed at creating a reality that would coerce Israel into further political concessions. Simultaneously, the Palestinian Authority, together with some other Arab countries, were continuing their political campaign against Israel in every international arena, contrary to the principle that direct negotiations were the only way of putting an end to the conflict.

37. The ESCWA report should be viewed only in that light. The issues dealt with in the report would be addressed through direct bilateral negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. By seeking to prejudge such issues, the report undermined the bilateral spirit of the peace process. It also overlooked the fact that the Palestinian Authority exercised jurisdiction over natural resources in accordance with agreements already reached between the parties, while interim cooperative arrangements were in place with respect to many shared resources, pending the outcome of the permanent status negotiations.

38. Israelis and Palestinians were living through a difficult period. The seeds of peace planted in Madrid, Oslo and Washington were at risk for the recrudescence of terrorist acts had shattered the fragile mutual confidence. The greatest danger in the current situation, was that there would be a total collapse of trust and of belief in the peace process. In view of that situation, the Committee should encourage the parties to take specific steps and come up with a plan of action that would allow them to rebuild trust among the people and return to the path of cooperation that had proved so productive only a few years earlier. An automatic endorsement of the report would have no positive effect on the situation of any party in the Middle East.

39. *Mr. Suazo (Honduras), Chairman, resumed the Chair.*

40. **Mr. Ayari** (Tunisia) said that his delegation was gravely concerned at the deterioration in the humanitarian situation of the Palestinians and the escalation of the repressive measures used against the Palestinian people, its leaders and its institutions, in particular Chairman Arafat's headquarters in Ramallah. Israel had embarked on a systematic policy of aggression against the Palestinian people, of destruction of its property, of economic suffocation of its cities and villages and of collective punishment. Those cruel and inhuman actions were plunging the Palestinians ever greater into despair, indignation and a sense of abandonment.

41. As soon as the international community had finally sanctioned the idea of a Palestinian State, Israel had elected to impede that state's renaissance and existence, undermining the very concept of the peace process. The Israeli authorities had opted for a "will-o'-the-wisp" policy, disputing commitments and obligations already assumed, rejecting the resolutions of the United Nations and all new peace initiatives, such as the proposals of the Arab Summit in Beirut and the Quartet. It was essential that the international community, particularly the Security Council, should take a firm decision as soon as possible to stop any further deterioration of the situation. The best course of action would be to have a negotiated solution that would allow the two parties to proceed with further negotiations as part of the peace process. It was high time the Palestinian people were allowed — like the other peoples of the region — to exercise their right to liberty and dignity within the borders of an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital.

42. Tunisia reiterated its call for the resumption of peace negotiations and the deployment of an international intervention force to protect Palestinians and Israelis, end the confrontation and give a new chance to peace, a comprehensive, just and lasting peace under Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978).

43. **Mr. Ramadan** (Lebanon) said that Israel was violating all human rights, breaching the international conventions that protected the rights of peoples under occupation and persisting in its refusal to implement several Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. By imposing closures and curfews and

dividing of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip into isolated zones, Israel had premeditatedly and systematically destroyed the Palestinian economy and institutions that had been built in the last decade mainly with the help of the European Union and some Arab countries.

44. The Israeli policies also targeted humanitarian aid employees providing relief for the Palestinian people, as attested in the report of the Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

45. The issue of the Palestinian refugees was of great importance to Lebanon, which was host to more than 387,000 such persons. Lebanon insisted on their right of return, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 194 (III) and Security Council resolution 237 (1967), and it categorically rejected the idea of their being settled in its territory, because of the provisions of the Lebanese constitution and because of the heavy burden that was placed on the country's capacity demographically, economically and geographically, which fact had been reiterated in the Arab peace initiatives.

46. The Israeli settlement policy, that aimed at the confiscation of Palestinian land, was expanding continuously. The settlers were, in fact, armed plunderers who terrorized the Palestinian people and vandalized their property. At the present time, the Israelis were preventing Palestinian peasants from harvesting the olives, fruit of the tree whose leaves symbolized the very message of peace that Jesus Christ had brought to the world.

47. Although the report did not spell out the socio-economic effects of the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan, it should be pointed out that Israel had reduced the farm lands of the Arab population from 14,000 acres in 1966 to 8,400 acres in 1987, had confiscated large areas of land claiming security reasons and, on the pretext of environmental reasons, had prevented the Arab population from digging artificial wells, whereas the true motive was to divert hydraulic resources to the Israeli settlements. The Arab population had been obliged to abandon agricultural work in favour of unskilled menial daily labour. Industrial and trade activities required financing that was not available to the Arabs. Nor could they work in public and governmental offices because it was essential to speak Hebrew.

48. The Israeli occupying forces were sowing the seeds of hatred and anger in the hearts of the Palestinian and Arab population in the occupied territories, thus delaying the peace which the Arabs had accepted unanimously in Beirut. That peace initiative was based on the full implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), and of General Assembly resolution 194 (III) in return for collective recognition of Israel by the Arabs and the establishment of normal relations.

49. **Mr. Husain** (Organization of the Islamic Conference) said that it was impossible not to be shocked by Israeli excesses in the occupied Palestinian territory and in the Syrian Golan and by their disastrous impact on social and economic conditions in the territories.

50. Ironically, that was happening at a time when there was an international consensus on a two-State solution providing for the establishment of an independent sovereign Palestinian State. It was therefore incumbent upon the international community to ensure, by constructive intervention, that the consensus bore fruit unimpeded by the nefarious intentions of the Israeli authorities who had demonstrated by their deeds their aversion to the peace process and to the creation of the State of Palestine, with Jerusalem as its capital.

51. If the Government of Israel truly desired peace and security for its own people, it should withdraw all its occupation forces and return to the peace process. That would mark the beginning of peace and economic and social progress for Palestine, Israel and the other countries of the region which remained affected by the consequences of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory and the Syrian Golan.

52. The Organization of the Islamic Conference was keeping a close watch on economic and social conditions in the occupied Palestinian territory and the Syrian Golan. That was exemplified by resolution 9/29-E adopted in June 2002 in Khartoum when the ministers for foreign affairs of the member countries of the Organization had reaffirmed, in particular, their earlier resolution in favour of the extension of all forms of economic, technical, material and moral support, including preferential treatment for Palestinian exports and the grant of exemption from tariffs and taxes. In the same resolution the Organization had called upon the international community to intervene to compel

Israel to release the Palestinian funds accruing from taxes and tariffs due to the Palestinian Authority. The Organization of the Islamic Conference had advocated in the General Assembly, the Security Council and other international forums the resumption of peace negotiations and the adoption of concrete steps towards the establishment of an independent sovereign State of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital; it was now doing so once again in the firm belief that that was the key to any hope of peace and progress for all countries and peoples of the region.

53. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his country reaffirmed once more the full sovereignty of the Palestinian people over the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the right of the Arab population of the Syrian Golan to its natural resources.

54. Since its occupation of the Syrian Golan in 1967, Israel had been seizing fertile land and confiscating territory for the building of settlements and laying mines which were a constant danger to farmers and prevented them from using the water resources. At the same time, the Israelis were digging numerous wells for the settlements and selling the confiscated water resources to the Syrian Arab population at exorbitant prices.

55. The occupying Power was also using various means of coercion, pressure and terrorism against the Syrian Arab population in defiance of all the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council and in violation of the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Second Protocol to the 1954 Hague Convention.

56. In the occupied Palestinian territories, the Israeli occupying authorities were continuing their atrocities in defiance of international resolutions, stepping up their inhumane practice of assassinating and killing innocent Palestinian civilians, occupying the towns and villages, demolishing homes and destroying basic infrastructure. They had also imposed a blockade that impeded the free movement of Palestinians and were attacking their churches and mosques in disregard of all humanitarian values and standards.

57. The Israelis were also using their war machine to commit brutal massacres, such as the one at Jenin. He referred in that connection to the recent report of Amnesty International which confirmed that war crimes had been committed by the Israeli forces during their occupation of Jenin and Nablus between March and June 2000. That report called on Israel and on the international community to investigate those responsible for such crimes irrespective of their rank in the power structure.

58. His country appealed to the international community not to remain silent in the face of the mockery by Israel of international legitimacy and human rights and not to remain passive in the face of the appalling situation of the economic and social rights of the Syrian Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan and of the Palestinian people in occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and to take decisive steps to put an end to the Israeli occupation and aggression, to restore the rule of law and establish a just and lasting peace. Such a peace could only be achieved through compliance with the resolutions of the United Nations which reaffirmed the need for Israel to withdraw from all territories occupied since 1967 and safeguarded the rights of the Palestinian people, including the establishment of an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital.

59. **Mr. Khan** (Pakistan) said that the foreign occupation of Palestinian territory and the Syrian Golan was causing serious economic, social and environmental problems and was having a deep psychological impact on the population. The international community must take urgent measures to bring an end to the violence and facilitate the resumption of the peace process which would only be possible if the population under foreign occupation were permitted to exercise their right to self-determination. His country extended its unequivocal support to the Palestinian people for the realization of their fundamental rights and regarded the occupied Syrian Golan as an integral part of the Syrian Arab Republic.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.